

EXHIBIT 8
DATE 3/26/09
SB 228

Senate Bill 228
March 26, 2009
Presented by Chris Smith
House Fish, Wildlife & Parks Committee

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am Chris Smith, Deputy Director of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP).

As originally introduced, FWP opposed SB 228 because it made a significant change in Montana's regulatory framework for wolf management, which would have at least delayed, if not prevented, current plans to delist wolves. The Senate Fish and Game Committee eliminated that problematic section of the bill.

In its current form, SB228 establishes priorities among the three broad policy directives for predator management. With, or without, passage of SB 228, protecting human life and safety will always be the highest priority in the context of proximate interactions between people and large predators. Protecting livestock and pets is also a priority in settings where depredation may occur.

New subsection (4) simply restates authority that exists in other statutes and is reflected in FWP's federally approved Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. FWP already can, and does, use lethal means to remove wolves involved in livestock depredation. FWP has regularly removed both individual wolves and whole packs where necessary to resolve conflicts and will continue to do so under current authority.

New subsection (3)(b) of Section 2 in SB 228 as amended, also simply reiterates a provision currently included in FWP's federally-approved wolf management plan. FWP regularly issues kill permits for other species such as elk or deer, so this approach is not unique to large predator management.

I am available to answer any questions the committee may have regarding SB 228.